

Dear Mark,

5/30/85

This has nothing to do with the litigation but perhaps some of it may interest you, the part reflecting my thinking about the JFK assassination. In the critical community I am alone in this.

I took time for a little more than polite thanks (after all, he did refer to me as a "giant"!!) because today the local cardiovascular doctor told me to stay off my feet as much as possible until Monday and keep the legs elevated. I can do the necessary, like keeping two medical appointments tomorrow, but nothing not necessary.

I've never met this man, who is moderately wealthy to wealthy and spends about half the year at his condo near Palm Beach. This winter he met a friend of my youth, a rather solid man, one of the inventors of nylon, who also winters there.

What is little known and may interest you is that JFK had ordered a reappraisal of our involvement in Viet Nam and about three days before he was assassinated there was a brief account of the Pentagon announcement that we could begin withdrawing our men, who ~~were~~ ^{were} not referred to as soldiers but as advisors. About three days after he was offed there was another brief Pentagon announcement, that the reappraisal had been reappraised and was found to be optimistic. The rest is history.

When I interviewed Gavin, and I have the tape somewhere, he told me that JFK had called him and others in and said, in essence, what can I do to persuade you that this is a political, not a military problem, and political problems are not susceptible of military solutions.

Between the two Pentagon announcements one planeload of our advisors were flown back. It was the first and the last then. JFK's plan was to withdraw gradually but regularly and to have them all home by the coming election.

Jean Daniel, a French reporter, was JFK's unofficial emissary to Fidel Castro and was actually with Castro when they got word of the assassination. He was also conducting official but clandestine negotiations at the UN through his former ambassador whose name escapes me at the moment, later publisher of Newsday. Attwood. I think Bill Attwood. Reapproachment was in the works. Also ended.

This man appears to have been a security case and a competent/ successful professional, businessman or both. His rereading of my first book is not unusual. A New York lawyer once wrote me after he'd reread it for the 10th time, which kind of blew my mind. There always has been and there remains a deep and genuine concern in the country, a great sense of discontent and dissatisfaction and the entire thing is one of the major causes of disenchantment with government. By now I suppose I've heard from about 15,000, perhaps more people, ranging from school children to state legislators and judges. Even the usual civic groups. Just today one of the local Kiwanis clubs asked me to address them again next month. So the interests and concerns I refer to cross all political lines and include the more conservative. Last time I spoke to the Lions the former local chief of police and the father of the head of the Rand Corporation expressed appreciation. I'd known them both for years, and they are Republicans. The former COP has a low opinion of J.E. Hoover, from the enforced hero worship when he went through the FBI Academy. And professional associations. ...When I got to colleges the conservatives were always the best of audiences and I do mean better than all but a few of those with liberal reputations. Then kids, now your age. (Those of the radical right are the most paranoid on the subject.) But LBJ and my benefactor Abe Fortas did a job on the liberals and the intellectuals.

Best,